



Working In Washington

2005
Annual Report

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Director’s Message

By Lynnae Ruttledge

As the “new” DVR Director, it is an honor to welcome you to this year’s Annual Report. We use this handy calendar format as a way to promote the employment of Washingtonians with disabilities every day.

This year’s Annual Report provides me with the opportunity to share a little about my background and help you get to know me better. On a personal level, I have experienced a disability since birth. With a partial facial paralysis and legal blindness in my left eye, I underwent a series of operations as a child, had the benefit of speech therapy in elementary school and then more surgeries as a young adult. To this day, I continue to wear corrective lenses, now with bifocals that reflect more my age than my disability.

My perspective of the challenges and opportunities facing the public vocational rehabilitation program has been gained from a unique blend of experiences including those as a former consumer of vocational rehabilitation services, an advocate as the Executive Director of a Center for Independent Living in Michigan, a policy partner as a Governor’s appointee to the State Rehabilitation Council and a member of the executive leadership team of the Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services program. I moved to Olympia in October 2005 to accept this position.

I am honored to be here in Washington and look forward to working with our staff, partners and members of the State Rehabilitation Council as we address the challenges and opportunities ahead. Meaningful employment is important and it helps to shape

our self-esteem and often defines our ability to contribute meaningfully to our community. Promoting high expectations and being able to impact attitudes is what motivates me every day and defines the work ahead for us.

As I look to the future, my goal is to set our sights high. Together, we can be successful in managing our way out of an Order of Selection, improving our successful rehabilitation rate and increasing our employment outcomes. Our expectation for the earning power of individuals with disabilities needs to be the state average wage rather than the state minimum wage. With the economy improving, DVR is well positioned to be an asset to our state’s vitality.

These are exciting times to be a part of Washington DVR. Please feel free to contact me – I look forward to working with you.



“
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”



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Celebration of Success

Over the years, The Washington Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Annual Report has highlighted the stories of individuals with disabilities who achieved success after receiving DVR services. In 2005, DVR continued this journey of solutions that build on the unique strengths of each individual.

Though self-employment represents only a small segment of the employment outcomes achieved by individuals served by DVR, it often represents the best solution for individuals who need a customized solution. This year, along with a variety of other types of employment, we've chosen to put the spotlight on several individuals who transformed their lives by creating successful businesses.

Whether those we serve are students, athletes, artists or public servants, they all have one thing in common – a desire to work. DVR is proud to support individuals in their journey to employment, along with partners in the disability community, employers, advocates, families and friends. Please enjoy this celebration of their success.

The DVR Mission:
To empower individuals with disabilities to achieve a greater quality of life by obtaining and maintaining employment.



February

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Ray Gleason ■ Olympia, WA
By VRC Janice Crafton

Ray Gleason experienced a traumatic brain injury playing football in high school that resulted in a seizure disorder. Ray learned to work with his disability versus fighting against it, and this winning attitude has helped him achieve the goals he set for himself.

When he came to DVR, Ray was a student in The Evergreen State College’s forestry program. Ray thought he needed support to reach his job goals. Ray’s counselor, Jan Crafton, recalls a revealing conversation with Ray early in the process. Here is an individual with seizure disorder who wanted to climb mountains. Crafton explains “He doesn’t have any triggers or know when they will hit, but he is not about to let anything stop him.” And he never did.

A significant part of Ray’s success was the partnership with college staff. Evergreen had a strong commitment to Ray’s success and a clear understanding of his disability. School counselors had become knowledgeable about the disability and provided the support he needed to progress in his forestry studies.

Ray ‘owned’ his employment plan, participated actively in designing it and acted as a full partner throughout the process. He assigned his Ticket to Work to DVR. As he neared graduation and the transition to job search, everything was on track. Ray had clearance from his doctors to pursue work as an arborist.

Ray learned about a small non-profit company, Enterprise for Equity, who works with low income individuals interested in self employment. After that, Ray was on his way. He began to work with business people and completed a six week course to learn what

it takes to be self employed. Enterprise for Equity worked with Ray to complete an analysis of his characteristics, conduct a labor market research and connect with banks and funding sources. Ray completed a business development course and then Enterprise for Equity helped him design a skeleton business plan.

When we decided to move forward, Ray used the skills he had learned to produce his own business plan, financials and projections. “The greatest benefit of being fully responsible was that Ray could sit down and discuss his business plan front to back. It was a viable plan that helped him secure resources and funding to start his business outright,” Crafton says.

Ray is married and shares his work with his wife. They live in Olympia, where they enjoy the success of having their own business, Cascade Tree Experts.

“
He is not about to let anything stop him.”
”
– VRC Janice Crafton



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Ennis Johnson ■ Bellingham, WA

By VRC Catherine Herring

STUBBORN. adj. (1) Firmly, often unduly determined in will or purpose; OBSTINATE. (2) Marked by perseverance; PERSISTENT. (3) a. Difficult to handle or work; RESISTANT. b. Difficult to cure or alleviate.

When Ennis Johnson came to DVR he wanted to be a chemical dependency counselor for disadvantaged youth. Ennis had experienced countless struggles as an African American growing up in Watts, including a stay in juvenile hall, fights with teachers at school, teenage drug and alcohol dependence and several trips to chemical dependency treatment centers.

He wanted to repay the community by giving back some of the services he had received over the years.

What stood between Ennis and this goal was a lack of education, a host of negative experiences related to school, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, a reading disorder and a disorder of written expression. While Ennis was a good communicator, he struggled with academics – he couldn’t make sense of what he was reading or clearly convey his thoughts on paper. The idea of going to college was terrifying.

In spite of these limitations, Ennis’ stubbornness prevailed. He worked through his communication deficits by using an electronic pocket dictionary and thesaurus. He learned to use voice activated software to get his thoughts on paper. He used tape recorders, note takers, tutors, and friends to help him through the writing classes at Skagit Valley and Fairhaven Colleges. Individual counseling helped Ennis cope with depression and become more firmly grounded in his own mental health and well being.

Ennis earned his Associate’s Degree and began working as a chemical dependency counselor at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Bellingham. He continued with his studies to finish his Bachelor’s Degree. Just after graduating, the Lummi Tribe completed a building project for Se Eye Chen To Kw, a resident youth home for adolescents struggling with chemical dependency. Ennis was hired.

He became familiar with Lummi customs and heritage to better understand the complexities of the tribal culture and his job. Now operating at full capacity, Ennis is the Lead Counselor, facilitating several group counseling and individual meetings a day. He has found his niche, adjusted to the demands and loves his work.

Sometimes being stubborn is a good thing...

“He has found his niche, adjusted to the demands and loves his work.”
– VRC Catherine Herring



Ennis Johnson and
VRC Catherine Herring



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Jennifer Bishop ■ Yakima, WA
By VRC Daphne Martin

My first impression of Jennifer was WOW – this young lady is packed with potential. She was 17 and attending Naches High School (where she still attends as an 18-year-old). Jennifer was enthusiastic about working in computer technology and I had just attended a presentation about Digi-girlz, a 5-day on-site technology camp sponsored by Microsoft to increase interest among girls in careers in technology. Jennifer was excited about the possibility. Her father, Jon, along with special education teacher, Wayne Sprouse, also supported making it happen. I was excited about the exposure Jennifer would get to the field of technology and the potential assistive technology we could discover to help her achieve her goals.

Jennifer was one of four high school students DVR supported in attending Digi-girlz in 2004. The young ladies were accepted as equals with their peers and Jennifer was even invited to play cards with one group of attendees during break. Jennifer needed a full time attendant to participate and her Grandmother, Faye Bishop, tirelessly fulfilled that role. Attending as a chaperone was one of the most enriching experiences of my career.

On the closing day, Jennifer made a speech thanking Microsoft for the opportunity to learn about technology and for including young women with disabilities. Despite challenges with her speech due to Cerebral Palsy, Jennifer is a powerful communicator and people were clearly interested and understood what she was saying.

Many were impressed with Jennifer’s sparkling personality and enthusiastic participation in Digi-girlz, including Mylene Padilla, Senior Diversity Consultant for Microsoft Corporation. Ms. Padilla recommended that Jennifer apply for the Do-It

Scholars Program at the University of Washington (UW) and wrote a letter of recommendation on Jennifer’s behalf.

Jennifer applied for Do-It Scholars with help from her special education aid, Carol Robicheau and me. In Jennifer’s words Do-It was “GREAT!” UW provided a computer, hands-free infra-red mouse and technology to interface with her computer at home. Jennifer’s plan is to get a college degree in information technology. To help, Do-It will set up mentors and internships for her in the technology field.

Jennifer’s story is an excellent example of how DVR, the school and business can all work together toward a common goal of partnership where all parties benefit – especially the transition student.

“
WOW! This young lady is packed with potential.
”
– VRC Daphne Martin



packed with potential

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Don Schluter ■ Pe Ell, WA
By Hillary Rossi, Washington Assistive Technology Foundation

Don Schluter founded a digital imaging/photography/teaching/web design business called Natural Settings Digital Imaging and Design after experiencing a significant back injury that made it impossible for him to do most typical 9-5 jobs. He had an interest and love of wildlife and scenic photography that he hoped would offer the right match between his interests and physical limitations.

To explore the possibility, Don completed an online training program that helped him develop a multifaceted business plan. With all the pieces in place and an IPE that Don and his VR Counselor, Judith Skillman agreed would support his success, Don was off and running.

He began to explore funding options. Don desperately needed transportation to make his business work, but soon discovered that most banks could not approve a vehicle loan for a start-up business. Don needed a small 4x4 SUV that he could take to the mountains, seashore and back roads of Washington to photograph wildlife and scenic landscapes. He also needed an SUV to take students on photo shoots in various locations and shoot digital images for stock photography agencies and web page designs.

DVR put Don in touch with Mark Frost, a business consultant from MD Business Infrastructure Services. Frost advised Don about Washington Assistive Technology Foundation’s (WATF) Telework Loan program. Don decided to look into this option and found a nonprofit organization that listened and believed in his vision and dream.

Don asked WATF for a \$4,300 Telework Loan to pay for a

“
It makes all the difference in the world having a dependable vehicle that allows me to go to the places I need to go.
”
– Don Schluter



Don Schluter Natural Settings
Digital Imaging and Design

used SUV. He found a vehicle that was easy to get in and out of, could withstand the tough terrain of his diverse work environments and got great gas mileage. Don wrote the loan payment into a PASS Plan and WATF approved the \$4,300 loan. “It makes all the difference in the world having a dependable vehicle that allows me to go to the places I need to go,” Don explains.

DVR also helped Don secure photography equipment, software and other start-up supplies he needed to begin working.

Visit Don’s web site: <http://www2.localaccess.com/naturalsettings/>



Don Schluter Natural Settings
Digital Imaging and Design



Don Schluter Natural Settings
Digital Imaging and Design

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Von LaRae Parker ■ Puyallup, WA
By VRC Chuck Polance

Von LaRae Parker applied for DVR services at a low point in her life. As she put it, “I was barely surviving on a GAU grant when I moved to Puyallup from Yakima to start a new life.” Already dealing with limitations resulting from a heart condition, Von fell into a major depression due to personal and financial circumstances. Frequent migraine headaches made it difficult to cope with daily life and caused her to feel helpless. A back injury that resulted in chronic pain further limited Von’s options and contributed to her depression. Despite the physical challenges she faced, Von wanted to work and succeed in her life.

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Chuck Polance counseled with Von and together they explored her interests, work history, strengths and limitations. Having only a high school diploma and no clear marketable skills, Chuck knew that helping Von get off “the system” would be a major hurdle. The VRC helped Von identify transferable skills that could be applied to the labor market in Pierce County. Conversations with Von revealed previous experience and background in floral artistry. She was still very passionate about the interest, but never thought she would pursue it again due to her disability. After researching the possibility, the idea of self-employment in floral artistry emerged as her chosen outcome.

Von attended training in Web Development and received mentoring by SCORE, where she learned the details involved in starting and operating a business. Start-up materials got Von busy making creative heirloom gifts, hand-wrapped and beaded ribbon flowers and pins, and all types of gorgeous flower arrangements that are an expression of her French heritage.



“
I am doing better
now than at any other
time in my life.
”
– Von LaRae Parker

Floral Artistry by Von LaRae sells exquisite French design style jewelry and floral artistry on the internet. With steadily increasing repeat customers, Von is operating independently. She is off GAU. The support of a DVR counselor who believed in her has helped Von manage her physical limitations and gain confidence in herself and her ability to succeed. Von LaRae says “I am doing better now than at any other time in my life.”



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Washington State Rehabilitation Council

By Joelle Brouner, Executive Director

In 1992, the law that makes vocational rehabilitation services available to people with disabilities across the nation was being reauthorized by Congress. The disability community mobilized and advocated successfully for increased opportunities for people with disabilities to shape vocational rehabilitation services. This advocacy led to the establishment of State Rehabilitation Councils across the country, including the Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC) in 1993.

The WSRC is a Governor-appointed council that partners with DVR to enhance the quality and availability of DVR services to people with disabilities taking action to enter the workforce. We do this in partnership with DVR by:

- Seeking customer input about DVR services through customer satisfaction surveys and public testimony
- Using customer feedback to inform input regarding DVR policy and procedure
- Making annual recommendations to

DVR about how to improve services. DVR includes these recommendations in their state plan that is reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration, which provides funding to DVR.

In October 2004, the WSRC began rebuilding from the ground up. A full slate of new members was appointed and a new staff was hired. Since then the Council:

- Has held four quarterly meetings, sponsored three community forums for customers to offer public testimony in Spokane, Seattle, and Kennewick.
- Established a contract with Washington State University to develop and conduct a customer satisfaction survey in 2006.



- Has focused its attention on learning more about the perspectives of DVR customers with mental illness and developmental disabilities.
- Organized a 15th anniversary commemoration of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The July 26, 2005 event, “ADA: Past, Present, and Future,” was cosponsored by thirteen organizations and included a number of featured speakers such as Governor Mike Lowry, Representative Jan Shabro (R–31st District) and Eric Pettigrew (D–37th District)

Working in coordination with the Client Assistance Program, the WSRC was able to convince DVR to honor the principles of informed choice in its direct pay policy. DVR was requiring anyone attending postsecondary education to receive direct pay for their tuition, books and fees whether they chose to receive services in that manner or not.

America’s public vocational rehabilitation program is being forced to answer many difficult questions from the President of the United States, Congress, other employment and training systems and people with disabilities. The age-old answers to the long-standing questions about the effectiveness and viability of America’s public vocational rehabilitation are no longer acceptable. Public vocational rehabilitation needs to join forces with leaders with disabilities to express a new vision for how people with disabilities can be better included in the American workforce.

The Washington State Rehabilitation Council is committed to being a leading voice in shaping America’s public vocational rehabilitation program by advancing progressive policies here in Washington State.



increased opportunities

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Joseph Elwell

By Linda Pratt, Director, Yakama Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Joseph Elwell served in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969 and was awarded the Purple Heart as a result of an injury from enemy fire.

After returning home, Joseph found work and before long started drinking. The years that followed were marked with a variety of short-term jobs, alcohol abuse, jail, traffic arrests and other driving offenses. After being diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder related to his service in Vietnam, Joseph entered and completed both inpatient and outpatient treatment programs.

To put his life back together, Joseph faced a number of challenges. He found a job, but needed to drive to keep it. He didn't have a driver's license because of past arrests, and when he took two warrant payments to the court clerk to pay his past-due fines, they incarcerated him. He spent two days in that jail, and then was transferred to the next jurisdiction where he had another outstanding warrant. As a result of missing work, Joseph lost his job.

Joseph applied for services with the Yakama Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Program November 17, 2004, and was found eligible on November 30, 2004. YNVR partnered with DVR in Wapato to support Joseph in achieving his goals. With counseling and guidance from YNVR and DVR, Joseph put a plan in place to go to work. He obtained a driver's license and negotiated with his previous employer, Yakama Juice, to give him another chance.

Joseph has maintained a positive outlook and has worked hard to recover and gain some of the things he lost in the past. With assistance from the Yakama Nation Vocational

“

With counseling and guidance from YNVR and DVR, Joseph put a plan in place to go to work.

”

– Linda Pratt



Rehabilitation Program and State DVR, three years sobriety and perseverance, Joseph has become a successful employee and a successful rehabilitation for both the State DVR and Tribal VR Program.



Joseph Elwell
and Linda Pratt



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Joe Lumsden ■ Whidbey Island
By VRC Georgia Quaccia

Curly willow, hazelnut branches and other limbs and twigs in the hands of Joe Lumsden are woven into rustic garden furniture and ornaments. Joe considers himself a craftsman rather than an artist, yet that is truly in the eyes of the beholder. He doesn't work from a design or plan, but lets the shape of wood suggest whether it will become part of a bench, chair, planter, trellis or arbor. A recent visit to his idyllic south Whidbey home revealed a workshop and yard filled with creations resembling the Ents (tree people) from the Lord of the Rings stories – each with a distinct personality and features. At home, he has a ladies “swooning couch” (a rustic chaise lounge) with a comfortable cushion overlooking the garden, birdfeeders, blooming fruit trees and seaside bluffs.

After years as a phone company lineman, Joe experienced a chronic back condition that required a job change. Limitations related to the condition led to serious depression. Joe was at a point in his life where a major change of direction was needed and guidance and counseling were essential to generating ideas, exploring options, evaluating transferable skills, looking at the labor market and providing information, encouragement and support. Together, Joe and his VRC, Georgia Quaccia, developed a self-employment goal that has transformed his life.

Joe's company, ALBE, stands for “a little bit easier”. He and wife Vanca, who is self-employed in the nursery business, now work together. Her sense of color and creativity compliment his craftsmanship, and her marketing strategies and business connections have helped as well. Joe supplies numerous retail nurseries and garden centers with one-of-a kind pieces.

“Joe supplies numerous retail nurseries and garden centers with one-of-a kind pieces.”
– VRC Georgia Quaccia



DVR assisted with business consultation, planning and start up. Joe and his counselor even took a road trip to secure a State surplused van now used to travel the island's back roads in search of the wood for the furniture. Joe's outgoing personality makes it easy for him to approach land and property owners to let him take the wood he seeks. They are often happy to oblige since the material he seeks is often considered waste material by others.

Joe's business continues to grow and prosper, and he credits DVR for helping him achieve economic self-sufficiency. It was a winning combination as Joe conceptualized a business that matched his needs and his lifestyle, and DVR helped him make it a reality.



October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

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SeaTac Job Club

By Dee Lord, Rehabilitation Technician

When DVR went into order of selection, each office needed to find cost effective ways to help customers get jobs. To meet the challenge, a creative and successful Job Club project was implemented by the staff of the SeaTac office.

Prior to start up of the Job Club, several conversations were held between vocational rehabilitation counselors, rehabilitation technicians and local employers. The conversations were intended to engage employers and share information about the availability of qualified individuals with disabilities and how DVR could be a resource for employers who need to recruit workers. These conversations led to a significant number of job leads and it soon became obvious that a formal Job Club could bring employers, DVR, WorkSource center staff and people with disabilities together in a successful partnership.

Sea Tac staff identified key skills that customers needed to master to successfully prepare for work. The entire office helped build a curriculum focusing on the critical elements of getting and keeping a job. A job seeker's tool kit was developed for customers. The tool kit included a career planner and resume workbook, a pocket guide to confident interviewing, an interview scheduler notepad, thank you notes for employers and dress and image guidelines.

The Job Club operates once a week and customers attend each week until they become employed. During each class, customers are assisted to use the resource room, including the phone bank, computers and other resources to develop resumes, identify job leads and complete applications. DVR mails customer applications and resumes to potential employers as they are developed. Consistent participation has significantly contributed to customer success.

“Job Club gives us a better sense of what our customers need to be most successful in searching for a job.”

– VR Supervisor Ron Falberg



To join the Job Club, a DVR customer agrees to the following expectations:

- Attend DVR Job Club weekly
- Sign up at a WorkSource Center
- Complete a resume
- Post the resume on several different job search engines
- Complete an “Informational Application”
- Attend all recommended Job Fairs
- Be JOB READY

The Job Club helps staff and customers identify when an individual needs a different level of services before seeking work. VR Supervisor Ron Falberg says “The Job Club has helped us turn the corner as a unit. It has helped us to see that a lot of times the least likely person is the one who finds and keeps a job. We can’t second guess what is going to happen and what a person has to offer.”

The office has improved their outcomes because they know the Job Club is a proven success in the toolbox of services they can offer customers. Now, they sign customers up for Job Club and see what happens. “It is really pre-vocational success.

Job Club gives us a better sense of what our customers need to be most successful in searching for a job, whether they need services from an employment service provider, additional coaching, or more targeted counseling and guidance.” Falberg adds.

Falberg goes on to say, “Job Club has enabled us to be intentional in providing job search supports in a fiscally sound way. We see greater success for a larger number of customers, and that creates more funding for more customers overall.”



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Workforce Development

By Rosemary Gallagher, VR Program Administrator

When the Workforce Investment Act was passed, it introduced new structures and partnerships for state vocational rehabilitation programs. It also introduced numerous challenges, such as eliminating long held agency boundaries, renegotiating roles in a totally new system, and finding the right balance between being a strong partner and meeting the unique needs of DVR customers.

In June 2005, DVR staff came together to build consensus on how to be more effective in our partnership with the workforce system. Staff members learned how other states used innovative strategies to successfully partner with employers and corporations to further develop local economies. The meeting was also an opportunity to celebrate the successes of local workforce programs and organizations.

DVR presented Community Building Block Awards to:

- The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County for emphasis on the importance of accessible and customized services to individuals with disabilities. Kris Stadelman, Chief Executive Officer, accepted the award on behalf of the WDC of Seattle-King County.
- Dr. Cinda Johnson, Nancy Tolan, Jennifer Marsh and Steve Kozak for the Passport to Success program (also a Governor’s Award winner in 2004). Passport to Success adds job-readiness, employability skills, internships and linkages to local WorkSource Centers to the special education curriculum.
- WorkSource Renton for their outstanding leadership in providing universal access and service integration. WorkSource Renton was also selected as the “One-Stop of the Year”



by the International Association of Workforce Professionals. The King County operator George Dignan and Nancy Loverin, Renton WorkSource manager, accepted the award on behalf of all Renton WorkSource staff members.

The overall result of the meeting was to create strategies to strengthen and expand our partnership with WorkSource. DVR staff agreed to:

- Become active in Workforce Development Council Boards
- Work with WorkSource managers to promote and advance the business relationship between DVR staff and center staff
- Find ways to share cases and support each others’ successes
- Expand our role in business services at WorkSource Centers



December

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Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the all DVR staff for the contributions of stories and ideas, and for the work they do every day to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities.

No person, because of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, creed, or disability shall be discriminated against in employment, services, or any aspect of the program's activities.

This policy is consistent with Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended in 1972, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1967, Executive Order 11246 as amended by Executive Order 11375, the Civil Rights Act of 1992, Governor's Executive Order 93-07, and the Washington State Law Against Discrimination, Chapter 49.60 RCW.

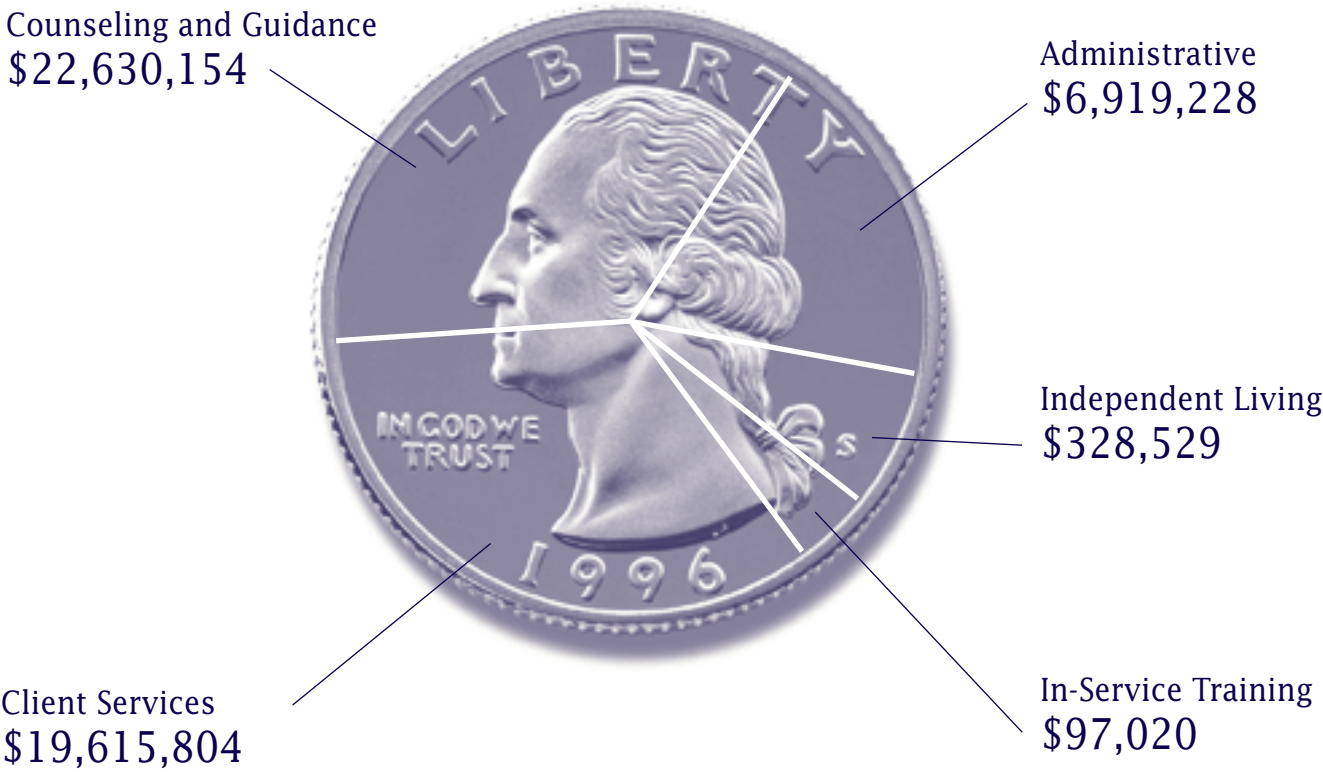
Sources of Revenue

Federal Fiscal Year 2005
Total: \$49,590,735



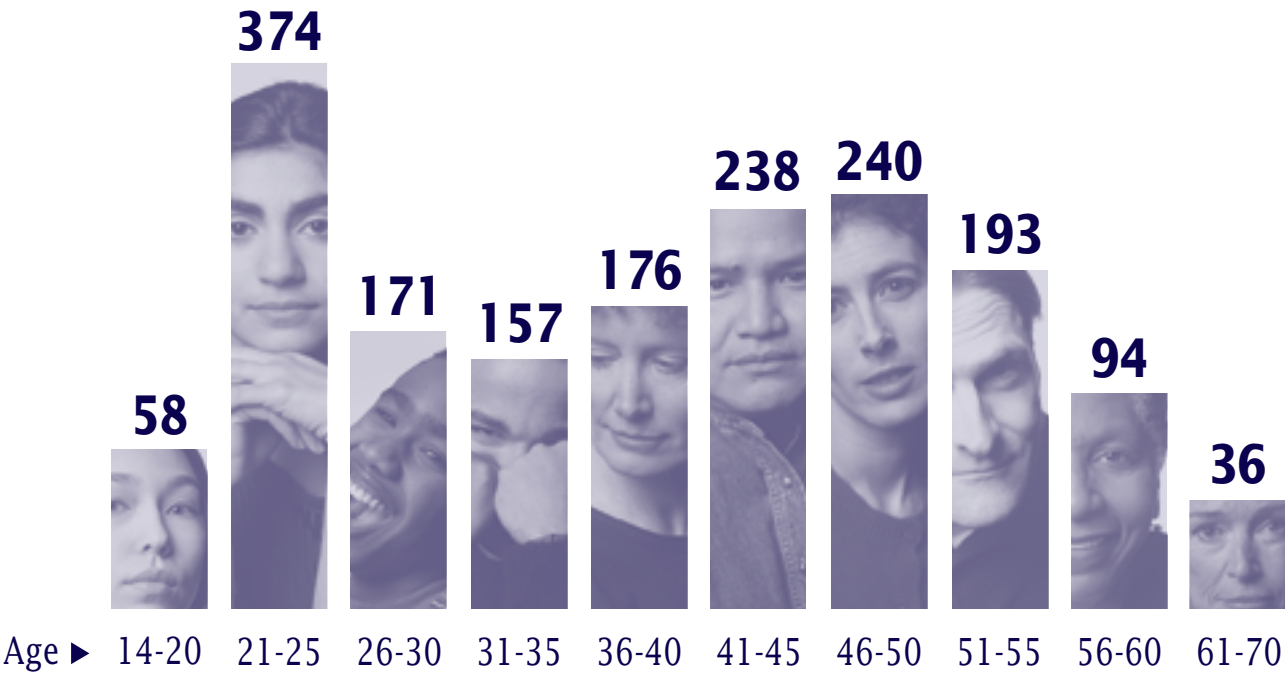
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Federal Fiscal Year 2005
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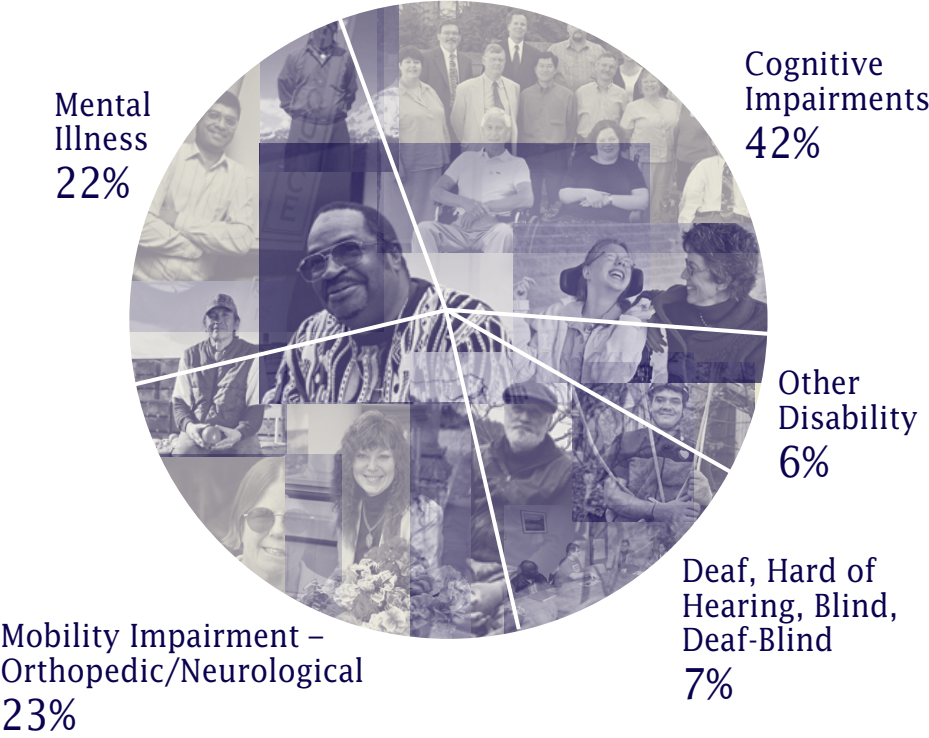
Ages of Customers

Federal Fiscal Year 2005
Total number of customers successfully rehabilitated in various age groups.



Types of Disabilities

Federal Fiscal Year 2005
Types of disabilities of DVR customers.



Average Earnings

Federal Fiscal Year 2005
Average annual earnings of customers before and after rehabilitation.



2005 DVR Annual Report

A publication of:

The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

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They can be reached at 1-800-637-5627. This publication is also available on our website at www1.dshs.wa.gov/dvr.

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